12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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as most of the population. These small one- or two-family groups do not have the social frame of reference necessary for the perpetuation of the native social system. And the social units are too small for the effective transmission of the traditional culture to the young.

Village life, relative isolation from Brazilians, greater population density, and, therefore, more intensive interaction with other Mundurucú, make for better preservation of the Indian culture among the residents of the Cururú River. But here, too, tradition is on the wane, and the native social structure has been drastically modified.

Actually, the stronghold of Mundurucú society and culture lies in the remaining savannah villages, and it is from the savannah area, once far more populous, that the contemporary dwellers of the Tapajós and Cururú rivers originally emigrated. It cannot be said that the Mundurucú of the savannah villages represent the "aboriginal culture," for they too have been deeply affected and altered by Brazilian society. But change has been the least among this population. A greater degree of political and economic autonomy is preserved, and the native social system persists, although it has been subjected to modifications. Society and culture in the savannahs is certainly not the same as one hundred fifty or even fifty years ago, but it is still more distinctively Mundurucú than in the Cururú villages and far more so than among the scattered Indians of the Tapajós River.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Planalto de Mato Grosso is a thinly forested and rugged upland, ranging in altitude from 2,000 to 3,000 feet, which forms the divide between the streams flowing north to the Amazon and south to the Paraguay River. The headwaters of the Madeira, Tapajós, Xingú, and Araguaya

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brush. Boys of about twelve and more, who live in the men's house, have very loose ties with their households. Only a house-by-house census could accurately determine where each of these boys belongs, for they are bound only by ties of affection to the houses of their mothers.

Central to the relative independence of the boys as compared to the girls is the fact that male labor is not oriented about any household economy, and the boys take little part in adult male labor until they reach the age of fourteen or fifteen. A few years after this time, most marry and shift their household affiliation. Unlike the girl, the boy is not reared within the social unit in which he will take permanent membership, and strong ties and obligations to the extended family are not enforced upon him. And since the extended family has its core in a group of related and coöperating females, it is not expected that a boy will help in their work.

The nature of male work combines with the social structural factors to make the boys' life so carefree. Young boys cannot take part in the hunt nor can they cut trees for garden clearings. They are expected to help clear underbrush during the latter operation, but the performance of such duties occurs only during a limited period at the end of the rains. Otherwise, they prepare for their future roles as hunters and fishermen through play. They gather wild fruits for their own consumption and shoot little birds from blinds in the underbrush. Or a band of boys may spend a day wandering along the banks of a stream to shoot smaller species of fish with the bow and arrow. When the boy reaches about fourteen years of age, he has grown sufficiently in strength and skill to participate occasionally in a hunting or fishing trip, and within two or three years he joins the men in most of their activities. He is then old enough to marry and, if there is no girl in his own village